



## What Do we Do About the Mexican Border?

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### **Apply Both Mercy and the Rule of Law**

The U.S. is both a nation of laws and a nation of opportunity. Our border policies must reconcile these two aspects of our nature—while retaining America’s core character as a nation of diverse people who are bound together by a belief in individual liberty.

These are the philosophical underpinnings that must guide any U.S. response to issues at the southern border. As a sovereign nation guided by the rule of law, the U.S. must maintain strong border-security measures to regulate access to American territory. A diverse array of surveillance technology, strategically dispersed manpower and a rapid-response plan would assist with immediately managing the continuing surges at the southern border.

The U.S. must also develop and establish multilateral policies with Latin American countries to find hemispheric solutions to the underlying problems that fuel these recurring surges.

Even while we formulate and implement these solutions to prevent further unauthorized entries into the U.S., we should not prevent potential refugees from seeking protective residence. The established refugee and asylum processes should determine the validity of asserted status claims, but the status seekers should be humanely housed and supported by the U.S. government. Status seekers should be granted autonomous access to American territory only when their refugee or asylum claims are affirmatively resolved.

### **Immigrants Are a Good Thing**

Let them in. One survey suggests that 97% of economists think that immigration has positive economic effects. Efforts to restrict it are costly. They impede free enterprise from creating prosperity, and they are fundamentally statist, a divergence from America’s tradition of protecting individual liberty.

Immigrants generally have a net-zero effect on government budgets, according to the Cato Institute. Taxpayers foot the bill for enforcing restrictions and covering the living expenses of

detained immigrants. Additionally, border-security bureaus can suffer from a kind of mission creep, preventing workers from being more productive in other jobs.

Although there is bipartisan support for immigration of high-skilled labor, the positive economic effects created by low-skilled immigrants are often understated. Doctors, engineers and computer programmers are faced with such burdens as household chores, driving and cooking, making them less productive. If immigrants with proportionate skills were hired for these jobs, they would increase labor productivity and wages.

When setting the number of worker visas, the government is faced with the economic-calculation problem: The optimal number of immigrant workers cannot be known by any central planner. It can be discovered only through the market mechanism. Such labor-market regulations as immigration restrictions end up harming entrepreneurs. In an economy recently plagued by labor shortages, immigrants would relieve labor strains. We should be more humble in our ability to beneficially intervene in labor markets and let free enterprise, not the state, dictate production inputs.

### **Make the Border Strong**

Given the White House's knowledge of its ability to direct immigrant activity, I'd say the first move should be to stop inviting illegal immigration. On May 25 of this year, Axios published a report detailing the sensitivity with which potential illegal immigrants respond to White House policy signals. One policy change (in this case, Title 42) meant a difference of 50,000 new illegal immigrants entering the country.

American policy should make clear to those who wish to immigrate that if they do so illegally, they won't be given food or shelter. They will be turned around and sent back.

This policy would require from American leaders the political will to establish a stronger border patrol and a completed border wall, but it is necessary to maintain our national integrity.

### **Legal Immigration—Not Illegal**

Penniless, leaving behind family and not speaking the language, my Russian great-grandfather and his brother were sent off by their parents for America. Like many immigrants, the family was seeking a better and more prosperous life. Not surprisingly, they picked the U.S. because there is no better country to which to immigrate.

Ever wonder why America has an immigration problem? When I hear people say how terrible this country is, I shake my head in amazement. There are hundreds of thousands of people at our border literally dying to cross over.

As a result, immigration is a problem, and we need to address it. How do we find a way to keep our culture strong and flourishing while also allowing immigrants to move here?

To start, the borders must be secure, which means more security and even possibly a wall. Immigration is a net positive—as my own family's time in America shows—but it must be done with clear rules and boundaries.

In addition to a secure border, we need to educate and help immigrants become part of our shared culture. America is a melting pot. It's how this country is able to absorb so many immigrants while not surrendering our identity and keeping our ideals alive. With these two steps, immigration can be transformed from a problem to the benefit it should be, enabling our country to thrive. Let's say no to illegal immigration, while celebrating legal immigration.